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SPRUCE KNOB

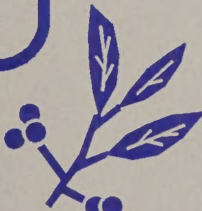
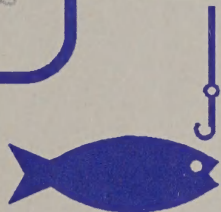
AREA GUIDE

SPRUCE KNOB
SENECA ROCKS
NATIONAL
RECREATION
AREA

MONONGAHELLA
NATIONAL
FOREST

UNITED
STATES
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AMERICA'S
GREAT
OUTDOORS






an Valley

To Petersburg

SR 55

55/28

 Visitor Center

SENECA ROCKS



Seneca Shadows

6

33/4

Briery Gap Road

33

SR 28

N

33

To Franklin

Cherry Grove



Spruce Knob Tower

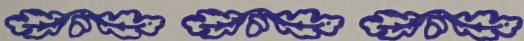
Spruce Knob, West Virginia's highest mountain, towers 4,861 feet above sea level. This rocky summit and surrounding mountains and valleys include some of the best backcountry for hiking and wildlife habitat.

The area is managed by the **Monongahela National Forest** as a part of the **Spruce Knob-Seneca Rocks National Recreation Area** which was established in 1965. In the act establishing the area, Congress directed the Forest Service to manage the outstanding opportunities for outdoor recreation, scenic qualities and other scientific, cultural and historic values.

As a **Working Forest**, visitors looking at the National Recreation Area from Spruce Knob can see places where the Monongahela National Forest is managing the forest's resources: Small tracts of timber are cut to provide hardwood lumber and to provide openings to benefit wildlife and create vistas. Elsewhere, pine and spruce has been planted to restore conifer forests and prevent soil erosion in areas clearcut about the turn of the century. Cattle and sheep grazing on tracts leased to local farmers provide meat and wool and keep those areas open, preserving the open scenic qualities and grasses for wildlife.

Camping is permitted throughout the National Forest. There are many popular undeveloped sites along Gandy Creek.

Under the Monongahela National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, over 19,000 acres in the Seneca Creek area are set aside for primitive, non-motorized recreation and remote wildlife habitat. Sixty miles of **Trails** provide the only access into this area of rugged ridgetops, mountainside meadows and fast flowing streams. Trails vary in difficulty, from easy walks to long loops suitable for backpacking. Extensive logging occurred in this area in the early 1900's. The forests have grown back, but remnants of old railroad grades from this era still can be found; some are now used as trails.



Picking berries and other forest edibles for your own use is a delightful recreational pastime in the Spruce Knob area. Blueberries and huckleberries can be found in the high alpine openings. Ramps (a very potent wild leek) can be found in moist woods. Gathering berries and ramps for your own use is allowed but collecting other plants without a permit is illegal.



Hunting and Fishing is permitted subject to West Virginia State hunting and fishing regulations. Rainbow, brown and brook trout occur in streams in both Gandy and Seneca Creek drainages. Spruce Knob Lake is regularly stocked with trout by the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources.

Nearby is **Spruce Knob Lake**, which was built in 1952 for fishing. Swimming is not permitted. The 25 acre lake is periodically stocked by the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources with trout. Numerous small but hungry bluegills along the shoreline make fishing fun for beginning anglers. Electric trolling motors (with thrust up to 31 pounds) are permitted on the lake. There is a small boat launch, parking and vault toilets. A wooden pier along the shoreline provides barrier free access.



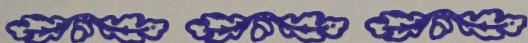
The **Spruce Knob Lake Campground** is located near the lake. This campground has 43 shady campsites with tables, fire rings, tent pads, vault toilets and hand pump wells. Twelve sites are walk-in type. There are no hook-ups, showers or dump stations; campers pay fees at a self-service pay station.

Gatewood Campground has six sites and can accommodate a total of 48 people. For your use are tables, fire rings and vault toilets. There is no fee.

Sightseeing is a popular pastime on Spruce Knob. The severe climate and strong winds from the west deform the Red Spruce, which is abundant on the high ridges. These 'flag' spruce frame views of rocky outcrops, blueberry and huckleberry heaths and grassy 'sods'. The bright flowers of azaleas, mountain laurel and rhododendron paint the slopes from May through July. The lower slopes of Spruce Mountain and surrounding areas are covered with hardwood forests of beech, birch, maple and cherry which blaze with color each fall.



The **Spruce Knob Tower**, located on the top of Spruce Knob, provides the best vantage point of the area. A stone and steel tower contains displays that point out local landmarks and features. Around the base of the tower, the **Whispering Spruce Nature Trail**, makes an easy 3/4 mile loop through rock gardens, heath barrens and spruce forests. Interpretive signs introduce visitors to the natural history of the area along an almost level, hard-packed gravel trail with several vista points, all wheelchair accessible. Restrooms and picnicking sites are provided adjacent to the paved parking lot.



The **Spruce Knob Picnic Area** is located one and a half miles south of Spruce Knob Tower along the road to the tower. Nestled amongst a dense stand of Red Spruce and patches of azaleas, are picnic tables, toilets and a hand pumped well. On windy or cloudy days, this picnic area is more sheltered than on top of the knob.



Whispering Spruce Nature Trail

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Weather on Spruce Knob can be severe. The one-sided red spruce are a result of the fierce winds that blow across this high peak. Be prepared for rain (or snow in the fall, winter and spring). Spruce Knob receives more than 40 inches of precipitation annually. Frost may occur during any month. It is important to have proper equipment and clothing for protection against rain and cold. Know the symptoms and treatment of hypothermia.

Winter travel is not recommended; however, County Road 29 and Forest Road 1 are plowed. Caution should be exercised when travelling on these roads.

Roads are narrow and winding, and traffic can be heavy, especially on weekends.

Be aware of poisonous snakes such as timber rattlers and copperheads.

Water from streams and springs should be treated before drinking or cooking. Giardia lamblia, the protozoan which causes the illness Giardiasis, can most effectively be killed by boiling water for five minutes.

DIRECTIONS

From the north:

Take Whitmer Road (CO-29) south from US-33 (one mile west of Harman) to Whitmer for 8.3 miles. From Whitmer continue south on Whitmer Road for 10.3 miles and turn left on Forest Road 1 for 2.5 miles to the campground and lake.

From the south:

Turn left onto Forest Road 112 for approximately 11 miles to the lake.

From the east:

Take Briery Gap Road (CO-33/4 at Gateway General Store), 2 miles south of Riverton off US-33, for 2.5 miles to Forest Road 112 and follow the signs to Spruce Knob.



This brochure is available
in large print at the
Potomac Ranger Station and
Seneca Rocks Visitor Center.

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

Ambulance/Rescue (Riverton)	567-2412
State Police (Elkins)	637-0200
State Police (Franklin)	358-2200
Randolph County Sheriff	636-2000
Pendleton County Sheriff	358-2214

Pay phones located in Whitmer, Riverton and Circleville.

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Mid-Appalachian Interpretive Association.*

If you need more information,
please contact:

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Route 3, Box 240
Petersburg, WV 26847
Phone (304) 257-4488
(weekdays only)

Seneca Rocks Visitor Center
U.S. Forest Service
P.O. Box 13
Seneca Rocks, WV 26884
Phone (304) 567-2827
(daily, except winter)

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